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Haydn, have all treated in various places the principal subject of the fugue, *Kyrie Eleison* :—



Towards the middle of the fugue, the second subject receives a chromatic alteration, which is very effective—but in the main what is excellent in this work is common to the great masters. The orchestra doubles the voice parts, which preserves clearness and also the method of the old school. It is curious that in the last cadence, Adagio, the final chord is left without any third—a gothic combination, to which the ear is with difficulty reconciled.

(To be continued.)

CHOIR AND CHORUS SINGING.

(Continued from page 167.)

CHAPTER VIII.

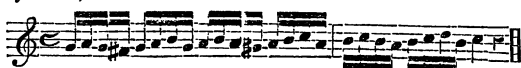
ON THE ARTICULATION OF THE VOCAL ORGAN, OR VOCALISATION IN CHORUS.

62. Ancient music of the German School, particularly Handel's Oratorios, contain choruses in which are very difficult passages, and which require a peculiar knowledge of vocalisation on the part of the singers. It must be owned that this quality is very rare among this kind of singers; whence it happens that the attempts which have been made in France, and in some other parts of Europe, to interpret this beautiful music in a suitable manner, have often been fruitless, and that the execution of the fugue in the *Kyrie* of Mozart's Requiem Mass is scarcely ever satisfactory.

63. Two obstacles arise to hinder the proper execution of pieces of this kind: the first consists, as I have just said, in the incapacity of the singers; the second, in the ignorance in which Directors of Choruses are of the real character of these works, and in consequence, the bad direction which they give them. In France, the movements are taken with too great rapidity; and the singers, giving all possible development to the power of their lungs, almost always make a horrible cacaphony of this same music, which, if sung well, would produce the finest effects.

64. Although one can never hope to bring mere Chorus-singers to a perfection equal to that of first-rate singers, it is not on that account impossible to attain to the degree of skill necessary for the execution of the pieces I have just now been mentioning; as is proved by the relative perfection we sometimes remark in these choruses in Germany, in England, in the Institution of Sacred Music, and lastly in the execution of the *Messiah* at the Musical Festival given at Brussels in 1834. I know that to attain even to a somewhat satisfactory execution, long practice is necessary; but in giving a certain order to these practices, the progress of the singers may be hastened.

The passages which should be vocalised on one syllable, such as this—



can only be practised collectively, when the Chorus is become skilful. At first, the Director of the School, or Conductor of the Chorus, should give individual practices, and make them in a slow movement, being careful to cause every note to be articulated by a supple movement of the vocal organ, and to unite them one to another with equality of tone. When these partial studies are sufficiently advanced, the choralists should be joined in groups of two, four, six, or eight of the same kind of voice; at last, when the trebles, altos, tenors, and basses have attained to a good execution, the four parts should be united.

65. If we would avoid confusion, all those choruses in which passages of vocalisation occur, should be performed in moderate time. This precaution is not only necessary, in order to render the delivery of the passages easier to the singers, but also in order to give the audience time enough to discern the commencement of the fugues, with which all pieces of this kind are filled in the Oratorios of Handel, Porpora, and some other old masters of their time.

66. It is necessary, also, to moderate the power of the voice in the execution of rapid passages dispersed throughout these choruses. Singing *mezza voce* has the best effect in these passages. The effect may however be augmented by light shadings of *crescendo* when the passage ascends, and of *decrescendo* when it descends; but it is difficult for a Chorus to do this when they are numerous.

67. There are beautiful models of vocalised choruses in the works of the authors above named; Handel is particularly distinguished in this style. His Oratorios contain admirable models; among these the *Messiah* appears to me to hold the first place. In the choruses of this Oratorio we find a richness of form which exists, perhaps, in no other composition. I will here mention, as excellent studies, some of the finest choruses in that beautiful work, which contain these vocalised divisions, viz.:—"And he shall purify the sons of Levi;" "For unto us a child is born;" "His yoke is easy;" &c.

N.B.—The *Messiah* is so well known, and so accessible to all English Choirs, that it seems superfluous to give the quotations from these three choruses, printed by M. Fetis.

CHAPTER IX.

ON THE MELODIC PHRASE, THE HARMONIC PHRASE, AND THE RHYTHMICAL PHRASE.

68. The phrase in music is a fragment of the idea of the composer, contained in a certain number of measures. Several phrases complete this idea.

69. It would be impossible to represent truthfully that which the composer has imagined, if the performers did not properly understand the character of his thought; now, this does not always happen—or rather, it very rarely happens. If it were only necessary to ascertain whether the object of the piece to be sung is grave or gay, calm or impassioned, one could not be long in uncertainty, and the singers would soon understand the character they must give to their performance. But music has not always the decided tinge of those affections of the soul, of which mention has just been made. It may express different sentiments by multitudes of shadings; often, indeed, its most powerful charm lies in a kind of vagueness, which leaves the real object of the composition unperceived, while yet there is a sentiment in its contexture which does not escape musicians of delicate perception.

70. But that which is comprehended without diffi-

CHOIR AND CHORUS SINGING (continued from page 178).

culty by a well-trained musician at the sight of a score of the composition, or by an audience at the execution of a piece of music, is enigmatical for the orchestral performer or choralist, who have before their eyes only those intermediate parts which are insignificant by themselves, and which often present no orderly succession [*suite*] to their minds. All good Conductors of Orchestras, all good Directors of Choirs or Choruses, should, then, before beginning the practice of a piece of new, or at least unknown music, analyse its spirit and character in a speech addressed to the Orchestra or Chorus. Rendered attentive by the general instruction they have received, the performers will not be obliged to wait till long and fatiguing trials have painfully revealed to them the idea of the composer, and they will at once give the suitable character of expression, accent, sweetness, or power to the music: in fact, we should not see that which now constantly happens,—the choralists and the musicians in the orchestra singing or playing their part in great compositions, without attaching to them any other sense than that of the notes which are on the paper.

71. To seize the character of the author's idea in

Allegro moderato.

The musical score consists of four staves. Each staff begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The first three staves have a treble clef, while the fourth has a bass clef. The notation includes various note values, rests, and dynamic markings: *cres.*, *poco*, and *a*. The score is written in common time (C).

(To be continued.)

THE MUSICAL FESTIVALS.

THREE musical festivals have been held during three successive weeks of the present month, at Worcester, Norwich, and Liverpool. The Norwich festival has been held triennially for these thirty years; the Worcester festival, though triennial in as far as that city is concerned, is in fact annual, belonging to the series of meetings of the three Choirs of Worcester, Gloucester, and Hereford, regularly held during more than a century. The Liverpool festival was held on an extraordinary occasion, the opening of the newly-finished St. George's Hall—a magnificent building, of which the Liverpool people are naturally proud.

These music-meetings have furnished most of the morning papers of London with the usual number of columns, full of lengthy details and elaborate criticisms. At all of them the same oratorios have been performed; the *Messiah*, the *Creation*, *Elijah*, and the *Last Judgment*. The principal singers at all the three were Madame Clara Novello, Madame Castellan, Miss Dolby, Sims Reeves, Weiss, Gardoni, and Belletti; Madame Viardot, Lockey, and Formes, were at Worcester and Liverpool; Madame Bosio, Lablache, and Reichardt, were only at Norwich.

In looking over all the programmes, we find only one novelty at all worthy of being noticed—a new composition of Meyerbeer, performed at Norwich. It is the Ninety-first Psalm; a double chorus in eight vocal parts, without instrumental accompaniment. Though the voices were assisted, contrary to the expressed intention of the author, by an accompaniment on the organ, it proved quite ineffective.

a composition, and to give it in the execution, is called phrasing. Phrasing is of several kinds. In the execution of choruses it is called Melodic Phrasing, when all the parts equally contribute to the effect, and have successive returns [*rentrées*], as in the majority of the compositions of the ancient Italian, German, and French schools. Melodic phrasing exists in every piece of music, by means of the upper part, which contains the melody, unless the chorus is only the accompaniment of a principal voice. This kind of phrasing, in order to attain the greatest possible development of effect in the music, should be to the upper part of the chorus what it is to a solo singer entrusted with the care of rendering a melody; that is to say, the collective expression of all the singers entrusted with the care of this part should be uniform, inspired with the same sentiment, and should together form the effect of one powerful voice, the expression of which should be just and suitable.

Thus in the following example, the melodic phrasing can only be in the higher part, and all the efforts of the Head of the Choir or Chorus should have for their object the uniform rendering of this phrase by all the voices of that part:—

At Liverpool, it is proper to mention that the festival there was got up almost extempore. The inauguration of St. George's Hall, at which the presence of the Queen had once been expected, was to have been similar to that of the Crystal Palace at Sydenham; and it was not till it was found that her Majesty was not to attend, that the idea of a regular musical festival was adopted. Sir Henry Bishop had only a month to provide all the performers and to make every arrangement; and the names of his principal singers, with the magnitude and quality of his chorus and instrumental orchestra, showed the zeal and energy with which he accomplished his task.

In regard to the pecuniary results of these festivals, it appears that the meeting of the Three Choirs has manifested that increasing success which may be dated from the establishment of local choral societies (a recommendation first proposed and strongly advocated by the *Musical Times*); while at Norwich the surplus beyond the expenses, which in some former years has amounted to 2000*l.*, will, it is said, scarcely exceed 100*l.* The surplus at Liverpool is estimated at about 500*l.* The meeting of the Three Choirs being for the benefit of the poorer clergy of an extensive district, it has always been supported, independently of the proceeds of the performances, by large contributions from the surrounding nobility and gentry. We think the surplus would in each instance have been larger, and the musical efficiency of these festivals much increased, by confining the principal vocalists engaged to the English singers and those few foreigners who have really studied the oratorio works that form the main attractions of these